

Nurturing Parenting Programs

Brief Program Description

Since the inception of mandatory reporting statutes, reported cases of child abuse and neglect have been increasing steadily nationwide. In 1996, the U.S Department of Health and Human Services estimated that the number of child abuse and neglect reports nearly doubled between 1986 and 1993, rising 98% from 1.42 million to 2.81 million. During the same time period, the number of seriously injured children nearly quadrupled, increasing from 141,700 in 1986 to 565,000 in 1993. Research has shown that parenting education for adults and adolescents before they become parents is often identified as the strategy most likely to prevent initial injuries to children.

The foundation of the Nurturing Parenting Programs is that parenting is learned. The programs are based on six assumptions; 1) The family is a system, 2) empathy is the single most desirable quality in nurturing parenting, 3) parenting exists on a continuum, 4) learning is both cognitive and affective, 5) children who feel good about themselves are more likely to become nurturing parents, and 6) No one truly prefers abusive interactions. The ultimate objective of the programs are to 1) stop the intergenerational cycle of child abuse in families by building nurturing parenting skills, 2) reduce the rate of recidivism in families receiving social services, 3) reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency among high-risk youth, 4) reduce the rate of alcohol abuse in high risk families, and 5) lower the rate of multiple pregnancies among teenage girls.

Program Strategies

The Nurturing Parenting Programs teach age-specific parenting skills along with addressing the need to nurture oneself. The program curriculum consists of separate curriculum for parents and for the children. The content of the parent portion of the program focuses on increasing self-esteem and self-concept while teaching nurturing parenting skills appropriate for the age group of the child. The program is administered in two formats; Home-Based and Center-Based. Home Based sessions generally occur on a weekly basis, lasting from 1 to 1 ½ half hours. During each home visit, generally the first hour is spent with the parent and the home visitor working together. The remaining time is spent working with the family as a whole. Each home session follows a consistent format: Icebreaker and Home practice Check-In (10 minutes), Parenting Skills and Self-Nurturing Activities (45 minutes), Home Practice Exercise (5 minutes), Family Nurturing Time (25 minutes).

Center or Group-Based instruction occurs on a weekly basis, generally lasting from 2 ½ to 3 hours once a week. The number of group-based sessions varies from 12 (Parents and Adolescents) to 23 (Parents and Children, Birth to 5 years). Parents and children attend separate group sessions meeting concurrently. Topics presented are similar to those presented in the Home-Based setting.

Population Focus

The Nurturing Parenting Programs have been field tested with families at risk for abuse and neglect, families identified as abusive or neglectful, families in recovery for alcohol or other drug abuse, families at risk for delinquency, parents incarcerated for crimes against society, and adults seeking to become adoptive or foster parents.

Suitable Settings

The program is suitable for implementation in a variety of environments including the home, church, prison classrooms, and conference rooms at State, county, or private non-profit agencies.

Required Resources

Required resources include training manuals for parents, children, and adolescents, parenting handbooks, implementation manuals, and instructional videos.

Implementation Timeline

Group and Home-Based instructions occurs once a week, from between 1 ½ to 3 hours a session.

Outcomes

Results of the initial study included the following:

- Pre and post-test data indicated that significant positive changes occurred in the parenting and child-rearing attitudes of the parents including more appropriate expectations, increased empathic awareness of the children's needs, a decrease in the use of corporal punishment, and a decrease in parent-child role reversal.
- Posttest data gathered from children in the program indicated significant increases in self-awareness and understanding of appropriate parent-child roles. After 1 year, follow-up scores of abused children who completed the program indicated a significant increase in self-awareness and a decrease in their support of corporal punishment.

- Posttest results showed significant increases in family cohesion, family expressiveness, and family independence and a concurrent significant decrease in family conflict.
- In home observations demonstrated that behavior management concepts could be applied appropriately and inappropriately. The appropriate use of praise was the most frequently observed behavior management technique while ignoring was the most widely misused.

Contact Information

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

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